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Introduction. Translation in Wales: History, theory and approaches

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Translation is a key part of the present-day ethos of bilingualism in Wales. One crucial point in the process through which Welsh recovered its rightful public role as one of the country's official languages, after centuries of structural discrimination and invisibility, was the Welsh Language Act of 1993. Since then, translation and interpreting have become central instruments for implementing the policy of legislated bilingualism in Wales, which is based on the principle that through translation and translation-related practices (e.g. co-drafting, subtitling, translation pedagogy and the creation of terminologies and computer-assisted translation tools), Welsh can regain public visibility and Welsh-language speakers restore their right to conduct as much of their lives as possible in a language compatible with all aspects of the modern world. Under this framework, translation and translation-related discourses have become a shibboleth for language rights advocacy in Wales, where (sometimes heated) debates about translation range from questions related to civil and political freedoms to matters of governance, public spending and social cohesion.

Such debates have received widespread media coverage. One recent example was the controversy surrounding the decision by the Welsh Assembly Commission in 2010 to abandon the practice of publishing a full bilingual record of the proceedings (for which translation services are needed) in order to reduce spending (see Diarmait Mac Giolla Chríost's article in this issue) or the thirty-five day imprisonment of Welsh-language activist Jamie Bevan in 2012, whose trial statement amounted to a plea for the right of Welsh-language speakers to receive hearings fully in Welsh, and not always through the mediation of an interpreter. Eighteen years after the passing of the Government of Wales Act in 1998 which initiated the (still ongoing) process of devolving political, legislative, cultural and economic competencies from Westminster to Wales, views about translation as a means of facilitating Welsh language protection have become more ambivalent. While debate about the

contradictory effects of bilingual literary publications and literary self-translation has already marked the field of Welsh literary studies (Clancy 1999, 63–64; Price 2002; G. Davies 2004), open criticism of translation's part in reversing the Welsh language shift have also begun to appear in contemporary cultural and political commentaries. Certainly, translation has been integral to rebuilding the status of Welsh as a "living language" and to securing the right of Welsh speakers to use their language in situations where they previously would have been forced to switch to English by the pragmatics of politeness. Nevertheless, some cultural commentators have interrogated the long-term devitalizing effect that a language policy so focused on attaining bilingualism through translation may have had on Welsh and on its ability to survive. The ethos of translation in Wales, for example, has become mixed with engrained debates about civic and ethnic nationalisms, with zero-translation options (i.e. monolingual communicative strategies in Welsh) usually being perceived as at best inappropriate and at worst recalcitrant. For Welsh speakers, the protocols and demands of a legislated bilingualism facilitated by translation (a "scroll down for English" culture, as it were) have often acted as obstacles to the right of Welsh to appear by itself and not constantly in the company of, or mediated by, English (see Brooks and Roberts 2013, 102–126).

Despite the undeniably complex role that translation has played in Welsh cultural history and contemporary society, actual research on the history, role and functions of translation in Wales is surprisingly thin on the ground. There does exist a substantial corpus of published reflections on actual literary translation, mainly in the form of translators' forewords to books of Welsh literature in translation (Clancy 1999; Conran 1995, 1997) or as part of broader analyses within literary studies (Entwistle 2013, 41–45; Mac Giolla Chríost 2013, 144–147; Marks 2013, 158–169, 172–181). The last decade or so has also seen an increasing body of research on translation policies in the Welsh-language context (Kaufmann 2010; 2012), on Welsh computer-assisted translation tools (Sommers 2004; Watkins 2013), on Welsh translation error analysis (Wooldridge 2011, 2013), as well as the Welsh translation industry (Andrews 2012). However, research on translation in Wales from cultural, historical or theoretical perspectives remains sparse, though debates related to translation studies have occasionally been brought to bear on Welsh literary and cultural history (see for example Thomas 1999 and Davies 2004, as well as Michael Cronin's contribution to the volume *Beyond the Difference: Welsh Literature in Comparative Contexts* (2004, 186–202)). If it could be argued that Welsh cultural studies is yet to effect its "translational turn" (Bachmann-Medick 2009), then a similar remark could also be made of the field of translation studies itself, which, in spite of its long-standing focus on questions concerning minority identities

(including “Celtic postcolonialisms” (Stroh 2011)) – has rarely animated work on the Welsh context. This may be explained by the relative infancy of Welsh translation studies as a field of research (a circumstance that this special issue intends to address), but also by the peculiar relation between translation studies and the study of nations and nationalisms. While questions of power in intercultural contact are often addressed in the field, engagement with the concept of nation and nationalisms has tended either to side with the liberal critique of nationalism – associating “nationalist translation agendas” to essentialist, ahistorical values (Venuti 2005) – or to proceed by taking the nation-state as an adequate frame of reference. The “History and Traditions” section of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Baker 2001), for example, includes only those translation traditions defined by (in many cases contested) nation-states and continents. This makes for an eloquent geopolitical summary of those nationalist frames of reference that the discipline is willing to sanction, and those alternative, sub-state mappings that are being elided. Long-standing work on methodologies of translation history has not dedicated much attention to how best to engage with contested national frameworks (a problem that has been of deep and lasting concern to historiography proper, given the close link between nationalisms and historical practice). For example, though Anthony Pym’s seminal text, *Method in Translation History* (1998, xi), acknowledges that national paradigms for translation history are inadequate in the case of non-state nations, his own work is nevertheless based on the premise that doing translation history can become a bulwark against a world “currently regressing to scenes of competing cultural specificities” (thus seeming to place agendas of non-state nationalisms in an unfavourable light). Likewise, in his survey of “blank spaces” within the history of translation, Julio-César Santoyo fails to mention the often missing translation histories of non-state nations (Santoyo 2006). Indeed, most reference works in this field barely refer to translation traditions that lie “below” the historical framework promoted by state nationalisms or continental outlines (Douglas Robinson’s *Western Translation Theory: From Herodotus to Nietzsche* (2002) is an example of how such traditions go unmentioned). Thus, the long, rich and complex history of translation and translation theory in Wales – for example – has not been easily perceived.

This special issue intends to act as a forum for research dialogue between what we can broadly term “Welsh cultural studies” and “translation studies”, with a view to redressing, at least in part, the situation described above. By bringing the theoretical tools and terminologies of translation studies to bear on the Welsh context, and by incorporating pioneering Welsh contributions to the field of translation studies, the issue aims to offer a first

foray into what could be called the field of Welsh translation studies. As guest editors of this special issue specializing in Welsh cultural studies and translation studies, we believe that the intersection of these two fields is productive and dynamic. Further, the critical questions arising at this intersection may also prove relevant for other emerging research paradigms, such as minor transnationalisms (Lionett and Shih 2005) or the four-nations approach to the cultural histories of the British Isles (see the Four Nations History Network). This introduction briefly summarizes the significant role played by translation in Welsh cultural history and its prominence in contemporary Welsh language policy. Uppermost in our minds is the desire to activate new ways of thinking about translation in Wales and to make visible within the field of translation studies the significant research on Wales and Welsh-related translation currently underway.

The many faces of translation in Wales

Two years prior to the second referendum on Welsh devolution in September 1997, R. S. Thomas delivered a public lecture at King's College, London entitled, "Wales: A Problem of Translation" (Thomas 1996). In this lecture the poet, a staunch advocate of Welsh nationalism, elaborated on his conception of translation as a metaphor for (and a tool of) the English cultural and political colonization of Wales. Starting with the idea that "[t]he health of a language obviously depends on a core of monoglot speakers" (1996, 11), the increasing presence of Welsh-to-English translation in Wales and of self-translated individuals (as perceived in speakers' linguistic habits, people's choice of names and the anglicization of place names) is seen by Thomas as a sign of the advancing deterioration of Welsh language and culture, a process described in unambiguously colonial terms by relating it to the Spanish colonization of the Americas:

the more contact there is between conquerors and their subjects the more the pressure increases to have those same subjects made intelligible to them, *firstly by employing translators*, but later by forcing, persuading or cajoling the natives into speaking the language of the conquerors and colonists. (1996, 12, emphasis added)

As a tool for what Thomas called a "secret work of erosion" (Thomas 1992: 20), translation was, according to this poet, not an ally to, but a deadly enemy of Wales' linguistic and cultural heritage. This view of translation as an act of betrayal is a common one (see the *traduttore traditore* tradition), and in an endangered culture, such as Welsh, it can be felt –

and asserted – with some urgency. Historically, however, translation as a channel of intercultural communication has undeniably had a profoundly invigorating effect on Welsh culture, literature in particular. Translation between Welsh and Latin, for example, can be found in the very earliest Welsh manuscripts, and – as noted in Diana Luft’s article in this issue – the majority of medieval Welsh prose texts are translations from Latin, mainly religious texts of a devotional nature, piecemeal scriptural translations, apocryphal material and saints’ lives. Translations of French courtly texts were also popular, such as the late thirteenth-century Welsh adaption of the *Chanson de Roland* (*Cân Rolant*), and in the fourteenth century the translations of French Arthurian tales (taken both from *La Queste del Saint Graal* and *Perlesvaus*), known collectively in Welsh as *Y Seint Greal*. The sheer volume of translated matter belonging to the period between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, in particular, means that translation had a profound effect on native medieval literature in terms of theme, form and style. Elements of this tradition of manuscript translation continued into the sixteenth and even seventeenth centuries, though the decline of Welsh courtly culture following Henry VIII’s Acts of Union in 1536, and the reluctance of the translators to embrace the modernized Welsh brought about both through humanist innovations and print culture, led to the waning of its influence.

Though original prose written in Welsh becomes more common in the Renaissance period, the text-based emphasis of the Protestant Reformation brought its own influx of translations into Welsh, now aimed at the wider market created by the printing press. These, again, were mainly translations of scriptural and devotional texts translated from Latin and English. The crowning glory of Welsh translations in the early modern period was undoubtedly the translation of the Bible in 1588. The translation was originally envisaged by Elizabeth I’s government as a means of securing religious uniformity, i.e. by making God’s (Protestant) word comprehensible to the monoglot Welsh (its reading was made compulsory in all parishes where Welsh was the principal language). But such was the success of the Bishop William Morgan’s scholarly and literary feat (an achievement further analysed in Oliver Currie’s article in this special issue), and such was the exceptional status of this 1588 Bible, that it created a standard literary language that nourished and inspired a huge corpus of Welsh literature for the next three centuries, its impact reflected in the fact that the Welsh came to be known as “a nation of one book”. In short, this single translation is credited with ensuring the very survival of the language to the present day.

A large body of religious, devotional and doctrinal tracts were translated into Welsh (mainly from English and German) during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when

Calvinism held sway, with texts such as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) – *Taith y Pererin* appeared in numerous Welsh versions from 1688 – becoming central within the Welsh literary canon. The translation of more secular literary texts emerges from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, such as the popular renditions of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852); *Caban F'ewyrth Twm* appeared in several versions from 1853 and immediately became a bestseller amongst the radicalized Welsh readers of the time.

The Victorian era was also when literary translation from Welsh (mainly into English) became more common, both as a result of the earlier Romantic interest in “Celtic” culture, and to provide European philologists and literary scholars with textual material for teaching and research (Thomas 1997, 95–96). Though incomplete English translations of the eleven medieval Welsh tales known as the Mabinogion had been published since the late eighteenth century, with German translations completed by Albert Schulz in the early nineteenth, it was those by Lady Charlotte Guest, wife of a prominent South Wales industrialist, which proved most influential, in particular her popular one-volume reader of 1877. Through translations such as these, writes Sioned Davies (who herself published an English translation of the Mabinogion for the twenty-first century), “medieval Welsh literature was placed on the European stage” (Davies 2004, 161).

Medieval Welsh literature continued to be translated into English in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, principally in order to provide the newly-established University of Wales with texts for scholarly analysis (English being the medium of teaching Welsh literature through the 1920s). Consequently, literary quality often assumed secondary importance to literal renderings, and though these fascinating cultural documents served both a pedagogical and a nation-building function, their pragmatic nature means that they have received little critical attention as translations.

The flowering of Welsh-language religious and cultural journals during the Victorian era, often linked to a particular church or denomination and enjoying a wide readership, fulfilled the role of educating the Welsh people, and translated essays and articles were used in this context to give readers access to texts published in other languages, and to enrich and enhance the reading material available in Welsh. Neologisms were created as a way of maintaining the language's adequacy and viability in a Welsh society emerging out of the industrial revolution and nestling within Victorian Britain's colonialist enterprise.

Welsh-language fiction also emerged with the waning of Calvinism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, and works were often translated into English as a means of bringing Welsh literature to the non-Welsh speakers of industrialized, anglicized

Wales, or in order to project aspects of Welsh culture to readers outside Wales. For example, the first Welsh novel, *Rhys Lewis*, the “professed” autobiography of a Calvinist preacher by Daniel Owen, was initially published in instalments between 1882 and 1885. Recent scholars (see, for example, Pearce 2012) have shown how the English translation of *Rhys Lewis* published in 1888 was aimed, in part, at projecting a positive image of the Welsh people in the wake of a damning – and for the Welsh psyche highly damaging – government report of 1847. This report, popularly known as “the Blue Books”, criticized the morals of the Welsh people and lay most of the blame on the language (see Roberts 2011). The strategies adopted by James Harris, the translator of Owen’s pioneering novel, may be seen as an attempt deliberately to counter such attacks on a supposedly uncivilized Welsh-language culture.

Such studies of translated Welsh texts from a postcolonial perspective remain few and far between, and much work remains to be done in examining translations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in particular their relation to nation building, and to Wales’s ambivalent position as both a colony and a part of a larger British colonial power. Indeed, closer inspection of that very ambivalence would make for a peculiarly Welsh contribution to Translation Studies in general. Certainly, the translators themselves – mainly intellectuals with a literary bent – show a widespread unwillingness to analyse and engage with the act of translation, a consequence, perhaps, of the fact that translation is seen by many (translators and others) not so much as a fruit of academic study as of the daily reality of Welsh speakers (see the survey of Welsh translators’ study and training background in Wooldridge 2013).

With the growth of Welsh nationalism during the twentieth century, translating Welsh literature (into English) represented an attempt to form connections between the country’s two linguistic communities. Important works – such as the classic short stories of Kate Roberts and the plays of Saunders Lewis – were translated in order to enable the “Welshless Welsh readers to discover their own literature, and, one can hope, encourage them to acquire the language in which to read the originals” (Clancy 1999, 122). Similarly, anthologies of Welsh poetry translated into English – Tony Conran’s *The Penguin Book of Welsh Verse* (1967) being one of the prime examples – may also be seen as an indicator of the vernacular literature’s prestige, simultaneously “strengthening national identity and status within Wales itself” and “achieving status internationally” (Clancy 1999, 122). However, the rise in Welsh-to-English literary translation that has accompanied the renaissance in Welsh poetry during the second half of the twentieth century has also provoked polarized viewpoints about the risks involved in literary translation. This may be due to questions of form: Twm Morys, for

example, has resisted the translation of his sophisticated and innovative work in *cynganedd* (the traditional Welsh strict-metres) because of the huge formal challenges it poses (see Rowlands 2003). By contrast, another leading contemporary poet, Menna Elfyn, has embraced literary translation as a means of taking Welsh literature to new audiences. Her poem, “Cusan hances”, translated by Gillian Clarke in the bilingual collection *Cusan Dyn Dall / Blind Man’s Kiss* as “Handkerchief Kiss” (2001: 122–123), is an unambiguous celebration of literary translation, challenging R. S. Thomas’s statement during a 1997 conference on literary translation (see Rowlands and Price 1997, 9–10) that a poem in translation is like kissing through a handkerchief.

Elfyn has also pioneered the publication of bilingual poetry editions, with original Welsh poems appearing alongside their English versions. As was also the case in the fields of Gaelic and Irish-language poetry (Krause 2005), the response in Wales was ambivalent, to say the least. In view of Elfyn’s own involvement in Welsh-language activism, the move was described by one commentator as “dramatic and unexpected” (Mac Giolla Chríost 2013, 147), though concerns were voiced on aesthetic grounds more than in terms of any supposed cultural or linguistic “betrayal” (cf. Elfyn in Entwistle 2013, 42).

Critical debates emerging from feminist translation studies, with their focus on questions of metaphoricity, textuality and reception, might productively be brought to bear on the work of Welsh contemporary women writers. Tony Conran’s translation of Elfyn’s poem “Misglwyf–Mis-y-clwyf” (1995, 12–13), for example, omits a pun on the Welsh word for “menstruation”. Dismissing the play on words as “scaffolding” (Conran 1995), the translator ends by removing the word “misglwyf” from a poem that has among its themes, paradoxically, the patriarchal revulsion toward menstruation. Gwyneth Lewis’ *Y Llofrudd Iaith* (The language murderer, 1999) is a “detective story” in verse based on the “murder” of the Welsh language which was translated and expanded by the author herself as *Keeping Mum* (2003). In a further creative twist arising from an exercise in self-translation, the poem “Mother Tongue” depicts literary translation in Wales as a dangerous dalliance for women which is likened to drugs and promiscuity: “I went Welsh-only, but it was bland / and my taste was changing. Before too long / I was back on translating, found that three / languages weren’t enough” (2003: 15). Riddled with desire and guilt, the poem’s female literary and multilingual voice portrays herself as both free and unvirtuous, claiming the victim’s demise (the death of the Welsh language) to be a direct result of her consorting with translation: “If only I’d kept / myself much purer, with simpler tastes, / the Welsh might be living...” (2003, 15).

As in all enclaves where power and intercultural contact meet, translation has thus been a catalyst for debate and contention, but also a space for creative encounters. In sync with much recent research on intercultural communication, translation in Wales has also become a cypher for the many linguistic, cultural and visual facets of intercultural negotiation. From the notion of translanguaging, which originated in the Welsh term *trawsieithu* first appearing in the fields of education, bilingualism and language literacy in Wales (Lewis, Jones and Baker 2012), to translation as a way of understanding the literary idioms of Welsh writing in English (see for example Daniel G. Williams's article included in this issue or John Harris' analysis of Caradoc Evans' literary English in *My People* as a "grotesque" translation from the Welsh; 1987, 11) or the projection of Welsh arts onto the European scene (Mason and Nuselovici 2012), translation and translation-related phenomena are often intertwined with contemporary analyses of Welsh society and culture.

For this reason, perhaps, translation in the post-devolution period has received greater institutional support than ever before in terms of both cultural and language policy, and applied research funding. For example, the commissioning and publication of many recent translations of Welsh literature are indebted to the work of the Wales Literature Exchange / Cyfnewidfa Llen Cymru and its founding director, Sioned Puw Rowlands. Since 1999 Rowlands and her colleagues have been working hard to establish links between Welsh writers, translators and publishers and colleagues from abroad, and have ensured that Welsh literature can be read across the globe in languages as varied as Albanian, Bengali and Chinese. A central commitment of Welsh public bodies and public institutions during the post-devolution period has also been the development of translation and interpreting as fully recognized professional activities and the creation of translation technology and terminology for those working in Wales. Canolfan Bedwyr, for example, is a Centre for Welsh Language Services, Research and Technology located at Bangor University (comprising the university's translation team, its language policy unit, a language-teaching centre and a technology and terminology unit), and is today the most productive publisher of Welsh-language terminologies, online dictionaries and machine translation tools (see http://www.bangor.ac.uk/canolfanbedwyr/technolegau_iaith.php.en). Further Welsh-language resources, such as the government's own open-access terminology database, *Term Cymru*, the on-line dictionaries *Geiriadur yr Academi* and *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, the terminology portal *Porth Termau* and the mobile application *Ap Geriadur* all play an instrumental role in facilitating English-Welsh translation today.

Considerable focus has been given in recent years to raising awareness of translation as a profession in Wales. Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru, the professional association for Welsh-English translators and interpreters, has raised their profile, at least in the public domain, by acting as a platform for professional accreditation through translation examinations and by establishing standards and procedures for translation quality assessment. Wales's universities and FE colleges, along with the Welsh-medium federal college – the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, a public body enabling Welsh universities to increase and sustain Welsh-medium teaching – now offer short courses in bilingual administration and “Professional Welsh”, which focus on skills such as bilingual public-sector terminology, writing and working in two languages, teaching bilingually, gist translation and *trawsieithu* (translanguaging), understood as a form of cross-linguistic summarizing. With the need to work and publish bilingually in all public-sector institutions and the encouragement of the private and third sectors to do likewise, such working practices, invariably related to translation, are starting to be analysed through the prism of Translation Studies in Wales and deserve sustained attention. Interpreting, in particular, demands greater critical reflection: whereas the bulk of written translation takes place from English into Welsh, interpreting happens from Welsh into English, as a means of giving the twenty per cent of the population who speak Welsh the right to use their preferred language in public and professional meetings. In these contexts, interpreters are hired to interpret the Welsh contributions into English for those who do not understand them in such contexts, thus linking the activity of interpreting to the question of equality and language rights, and to the role of Welsh interpreters in language promotion (Kaufmann 2012).

The articles in this special issue give a measure of the significant and specific questions raised by the study of translation and translation-related phenomena in Wales. Jones's article is the first of a trilogy of articles dealing with translation in relation to medieval and early modern Welsh literature. Jones shows how writers in medieval Wales translated and adapted prophetic texts belonging to a wider British and European tradition for their own purposes, as a means of predicting the return – often from overseas – of a redeeming national hero (e.g. Owain Glyn Dŵr or Henry Tudor). His analysis focuses on a fifteenth-century manuscript collection, and by employing a concept of translatability enlarged through considerations of historicity and temporality, he shows how these popular prophetic texts represent a critique of the wider literary tradition. Currie's article takes us into the following century and to the onset of the early modern period. The greatest literary

achievement of sixteenth-century Wales was the Welsh Bible of 1588, and Salesbury and Morgan's translation has rightly been seen as a supreme scholarly and literary feat, practically ensuring the survival of the Welsh literary language into the modern period. In this article, Currie illuminates for the first time how the specificities of translation had exerted a lasting influence on modern Welsh prose style. He shows that the translators' pioneering use, in prose, of verb-initial word order, now characteristic of Modern Welsh, resulted from their attempts to recreate in Welsh the poetic quality of the original Hebrew. Exploiting a native linguistic feature (of poetry) in a new way for exotic stylistic effect is thus seen as at once a domesticating and foreignizing translation strategy. Finally, Luft's article examines the disparaging view of twentieth-century Welsh scholars towards linguistic "infelicities" in medieval Welsh texts, such as accusations of poor style and grammatical errors, as being the result of *ôl cyfieithu* or "the mark of translation." Luft traces the origin and ideology of *ôl cyfieithu* as a concept, outlines the problems associated with using it as a tool of linguistic analysis, and questions the critical attitude that used a shaky notion of "native" stylistic norms to evaluate the entire corpus of medieval Welsh prose, most of which consists of translated texts.

Discussing twentieth-century modernist Welsh literature written in English, Williams' article claims that one of the most salient aspects of Welsh Anglophone modernism is that it emerges from the uneasy relationship between languages and can be fruitfully approached as a literature in translation. Williams explores the role of translation from Welsh into English in the Anglophone modernism of Wales by discussing Caradoc Evans's alleged exposure of the warped working of the Welsh mind through his literary idiom, David Jones's revisionist history of Britain and Margiad Evans's sympathetic depiction of Welsh-speaking communities. While translation from Welsh makes Anglophone Welsh modernism distinctive, the politics behind the representation of the Welsh-language communities in English-language texts is more problematic. In his discussion of this circumstance, Williams argues against the tendency – frequent in commentary about Welsh nationalism – to equate language difference with racial difference.

The final two articles go beyond the literary realm to explore how translation also offers a prism for the study of other pressing social, political and cultural issues in contemporary Wales. Dijkstra's article looks at the translation of guidebooks in combination with Wales's international image as a tourist destination, as examples of a discursive invisibility that is in no small measure related to translation. Examining the Dutch, German

and French translations of the chapter on Wales in Michael Leapman's *Eye Witness Travel Guide to Great Britain*, Dijkstra explores the impact that translated guidebooks can have in the exoticization and marginalization of Wales in the international scene. Finally, in their article about the political constitution in bilingual Wales, Mac Giolla Chriost, Patrick Carlin and Colin H. Williams argue that in the politically contentious debate about the status of the Welsh language and its relationship to the English language, translation plays a crucial – and often unacknowledged – role. The authors draw on a range of papers from the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government and examine how the translation policy of the Welsh Assembly became the subject of a heated and divisive public row from 2009 onwards. The authors then go on to show how this translation problem evolved into a matter of constitutional difficulty, a phenomenon which may be unique to Wales and therefore deserves particular attention.

Taken together, all articles in this special issue show that any understanding of Welsh cultural history has much to gain from taking translation and translation-related phenomena into consideration. They also showcase that many of the theoretical and analytical concepts arising from the discipline of translation studies – from the translator's invisibility to untranslatability or cultural translation as literary practice – can be productively applied to the study of Welsh cultural history, society and politics. It is our hope that this special issue will provide a foundational resource in English (precursors in Welsh already exist, such as Rowlands and Price 1997, Prys and Trefor 2015) for translation studies scholars interested in the cultures of non-state nations and postcolonial contexts in general, as well as in Wales in particular. The research questions explored in this introduction and in the articles that follow are presented as a handful of illustrative examples of the productive interplay – in both directions – between translation studies and Welsh studies.

Notes

[1] A basic English-language introduction to *cynganedd* can be found in John Rowlands' introduction to *The Bloodaxe Book of Modern Welsh Poetry* (Rowlands 2003: 26–27), and a more thorough one in Mererid Hopwood's *Singing in Chains* (Hopwood 2004). For academic commentaries on the challenges faced with translating Medieval Welsh strict metre into English see G. Thomas 1999 and Johnston 2004.

[2] S. Rhian Reynolds' *A Bibliography of Welsh Literature in English* (2005) lists thousands of Welsh literary texts that have been translated from Welsh into English since the eighteenth

century. See also a database of Welsh literature in translation hosted by the Wales Literature Exchange available at <http://waleslitexchange.org/en/translation/translations1>.

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